

Peace Can Kill

CW4 MALCOLM MCCUTCHEON, CW4 DENNIS L. NILES, CW4 PABLO QUIRINDONGO, CW3 RICHARD MCCLELLAND, CW3 PEYTON SUPERNOW, AND CW3 GLEN E. WEBB JR.
WARRANT OFFICER STAFF COURSE 05-04

After 14 long months in Iraq, we were finally home. Before redeploying back to the States, we received our “get-home-itis” safety brief designed to smoothly transition troops from the combat zone to home station. Troops and family members alike were eagerly anticipating reuniting after a year of untold hardships—both in Iraq and at home. Returning home! The urgency of combat operations was no longer present. It would be criminal to have our fellow brethren return home safely, only to lose them through carelessness, poor leadership or negligence.

Redeployment training ideally should begin several months before arriving at the port. The Army mandates Soldiers attend classes to aid them in returning to home station safely. But other than the core Army classes, the aviation community, for the most part, is responsible for ensuring redeployment training is complete. What should a unit consider when developing this training syllabus?

Once aircraft are back at home station is not the time to consider if aircrews are ready to fly. In fact, it is usually best to have a sister unit pick up your aircraft if at all possible since your unit’s pilots may not be proficient or even current after block leave and recovery. Listed below are some items to ensure your unit’s success in redeployment recovery operations.

SAFETY

Enforce the standard. There is only one standard, but during a time of war, risks are higher and mission requirements may be placed ahead of normal safety considerations. Remember armament and range procedures. Flight and survival gear requirements are different in a peacetime environment. Also keep in mind that “land as soon as possible” no longer requires you to fly back to friendly forces. Now that you’re back in a peacetime environment, land as soon as possible means land at the nearest suitable area without delay.

RECORDS

- **Individual aircrew training folder.** Is the IATF complete and up-to-date? Have all required evaluations and minimums been completed or waived? If any requirements were waived, how long is the waiver current? Are all signatures and task lists up-to-date? Does the individual have to fly with an instructor pilot upon return to home station?

- **Medical records.** Does the crewmember have a current flight physical or is he on an extension? If an extension is granted, ensure the flight physical is completed within the prescribed time.

- **Individual flight records folder.** Does the crewmember have a current Department of Army Form 759 and does it annotate the required entries? Are all waivers and extensions annotated?

- **Individual pilot readiness.** Some pilots have flown so much in theater that they could become complacent. This is a common tendency for aviators who have flown almost every day in a hostile environment but are now in the “nonhazardous” airspace. Take such intense flying and add a couple of months of not flying, and the individual’s piloting skills may have become rusty. The unit standardization pilot should evaluate the capabilities

of each pilot. This doesn't mean every pilot gets a checkride, but in some cases a flight evaluation may be necessary. Things to consider: what is the experience level of each pilot and what flight conditions are they weak in? Instrument flight training was almost nonexistent while deployed, so will a trip to the simulator be necessary? A new pilot who was designated a pilot in command in country might need to be re-evaluated or retrained to ensure he is capable of operating safely in the national airspace system.

- **Aircraft.** Maintenance personnel should ensure aircraft are thoroughly preflighted before leaving the docks. After being flown hard for more than a year and having possible battle damage maintenance, aircrews need to give the aircraft an extensive and thorough preflight.

- **Standing operating procedures.** Now is the time to update your SOPs to reflect lessons learned and get the entire unit on the same sheet of music. Additionally, SPs need to check for local procedures that might have changed. This is extremely important considering you may have pilots in the rear detachment, companies that have operated independently and companies that have been consolidated to form task forces made up of various aircraft types.

These are a few of the items that need to be completed while a unit is in its recovery phase and returning from block leave. Do any of these items look familiar? You can look at this training as a mini-Army Readiness Management System inspection that you give yourself. This could be the best way to know if you are once again the well-oiled unit you were before redeployment and lessen your chances of being another statistic in the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center database.